

About Community

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Office of Community Development

Providing financial and technical resources to build livable and sustainable communities

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State and Local Cooperation Builds New Farmworker Housing

Oroville now has clean, comfortable temporary housing for 96 farmworkers in Oroville.

The idea for this project arose earlier this year when Jim Potts, under contract to OCD for community outreach, met with growers and local officials in Oroville. A representative of the Oroville Housing Authority suggested that a tent camp might be located on 35 acres the Authority was purchasing.

In subsequent discussions with OCD's Housing Director Ray Price and other state and local officials, an even better idea emerged—modular units that would be far less expensive in the long run, more

comfortable for the workers, and far more durable and easy to maintain than tents.

Under state law, tent camps can only stay up for 28 days. That doesn't cover even the full cherry harvest in Oroville, let alone the harvest of other fruits. And tent camps can be expensive. As Mike Colletta of the Housing Division has noted, tents cost \$3,000 each, not counting the wooden platforms, and are labor-intensive, what with the setting up and taking down, cleaning, and storage. And if they get wet and mildew sets in, the investment can be lost.

With assistance from the Department of Labor and

More photos on page 2



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Busse Nutley, *Director*

Paula Benson, *Deputy Director*

Jim Arthur, *Editor*

Nicole Wall, *Assistant for*

Circulation and Inquiries

Lenore Doyle, *Designer*

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This publication is available in alternate format or on cassette. Please send requests or other inquiries to nicolew@ctd.wa.gov or telephone (360) 725-2800. Mailing address is Director's Office, Office of Community Development, PO Box 48350, Olympia, WA 98504-8350.

Farmworker Housing

Continued from page 1

Industries and the Department of Health, Mike designed a modular bunkhouse and found a company in Salem, Oregon, that could build it. OCD ordered twelve units. Each unit can sleep eight and the units can be configured as one space for single men or can be divided for two families. The agency also purchased a shower unit, laundry unit, bathroom unit, and kitchen unit.

Total cost of the project was \$571,000. Grading and fill, water hookup to the city, and the basketball court and

soccer field cost \$291,000.

The twelve sleeping units cost \$16,000 each and the four plumbed, common units for kitchen, bathroom, showers, and laundry cost a total of \$88,000. The project can be amortized in less than four years, and the units will be useable for as many as 20 years.

The Oroville Housing Authority is going to construct 24 permanent residences on the rest of the site. Some of these homes will be single family dwellings. Some, if not all, of these homes will be built by next summer.



Getting Assistance to Farmworkers after Storm

An important part of the Office of Community Development's mission is being ready to respond to unforeseen events that affect people and communities.

When a severe wind and hailstorm hit many fruit-growing areas of Eastern Washington on June 27, the cherry crop was damaged and many farmworkers lost work. Staff of the Community Services Division got on the phone to their local partners, the local community action agencies. They learned that local food banks were anticipating a rapid rise in the need for emergency food supplies. Governor Gary Locke promptly diverted \$250,000 in emergency funds from the Military Department to OCD's Emergency Food Program. Staff then quickly sent the funds to food distribution centers.

Over the next several weeks as staff learned more about the storm's other impacts on the lives of out-of-

work farmworkers and their families, the Governor then directed the Military Department to transfer another \$500,000 to OCD for a range of emergency services for farmworkers. Anticipating these additional funds, the Community Services Division had contract amendments ready for OCD's local partners. Following the Governor's announcement, staff then convened a conference call of the local agencies and decided how much money to apportion to each. The action agencies agreed to assign nearly 75 percent of the \$500,000 to Yakima County, which was hit hard by the storm and also had the most farmworkers.

As this example illustrates, much of the work of the Office of Community Development depends on the close relationship with local partners – and closely following what Assistant Director Mina Apacible calls the “pulse” of each community we serve.

New Chair of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council

On September 14 Governor Gary Locke appointed James Oliver Luce to be chairman of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council. Jim Luce was a senior assistant general counsel for the Bonneville Power Administration from 1976 until retiring in 1999. He was involved in contract negotiations, policy development, and environmental issues. Before that he worked as a

deputy prosecuting attorney for Snohomish County from 1975 to 1976, where his focus was land use issues. From 1973 to 1975 he served as economic programs manager for the city of Everett.

The Council, or EFSEC as it is known by its acronym, reviews applications for large electric generating plants and certain other energy facilities and makes a recommendation to the Governor, who then decides whether to approve

an application. In addition to the full-time chairman, the Council has five permanent members, each representing a state agency. Other specified state agencies, and local governments within whose boundaries a proposed facility would be located, may also sit on the Council. The Council's staff members are employees of the Office of Community Development and work at offices on Plum Street in Olympia.

New Electric Power Plants

Proposals for new electric power plants come in cycles; by the end of the year the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council could be reviewing as many as five applications for natural gas-fired combustion turbines. If all were built, the five plants combined would generate nearly 5,000 megawatts, enough power for over 4 million homes.

Furthest along in the review process is the Sumas 2 project near the Canadian border in Whatcom County. The Sumas developers have submitted a revised application for a 660-megawatt plant and the Council will convene adjudicative hearings in October.

Diagonally across the state from Sumas, where the natural

gas pipeline from Alberta runs near transmission lines operated by the Bonneville Power Administration, independent power producers have proposed two plants. The Wallula Power Project, about eight miles southeast of Pasco in Walla Walla County, would generate 1,300 megawatts. The Starbuck Power Project, located near the town of Starbuck in Columbia County, would generate 1,200 megawatts. Environmental impact statements are being prepared for each and the Council has scheduled informational meetings for October 2 in Burbank and October 3 in Starbuck.

The Council has completed preliminary site studies on two other sites. The Mercer Genera-

tion Project in Benton County would produce 850 megawatts, and the British Petroleum Cherry Point Cogeneration Project in Whatcom County would generate 750 megawatts. The Council may receive formal applications for these plants by the end of the year.

In addition, as a result of the improved market for power, construction has started on two projects that the Council first licensed in 1996 and 1997. The Chehalis Generation Facility broke ground this summer and is four percent completed. Initial site preparation started in September for the Satsop Combustion Turbine Project. They will generate about 1,200 megawatts combined.

Housing Trust Fund Being Reviewed

Last year the Housing Division began reviewing the procedures and criteria staff used to administer the Housing Trust Fund, a 270-million dollar program with over 800 loans outstanding. The agency usually makes new loans twice a year, in the spring and in the fall.

The division's plan had been to review the program incrementally. Last year, staff reviewed underwriting standards and criteria for evaluating applications. Next they were going to review loan terms and conditions, then conclude by reviewing compliance standards and practices. The intent of the review was to make the application and review process clearer and more consistent.

During the course of the review, agency management became concerned about several issues associated with the Housing Trust Fund, issues that would considerably expand the review's scope. Instead of trying to conduct the larger review while holding a fall funding round under existing, and possibly flawed procedures and criteria, management decided to cancel the fall round, pledging, however, to increase subsequent funding rounds so that the full appropriation for the biennium would still be loaned out. OCD Director

Busse Nutley then reported her concerns to Governor's Chief of Staff Paul Isaki, who on July 16 directed the agency to initiate an independent review of the Housing Trust Fund and to develop new procedures and criteria for administering it.

Since then, the agency has established criteria for funding emergency projects this fall, hired the Sacramento law firm of Patrick Sabelhaus to analyze the Housing Trust Fund portfolio, and started a process to gather input from stakeholders about new procedures and criteria. The agency will issue an emergency rule by December 20, 2001, along with a revised program handbook. The rules and handbook will enable the agency to offer the spring funding round on schedule. Next year the agency will develop a permanent rule, with additional public participation.

Mr. Sabelhaus has over 20 years experience practicing law in the private sector with a special emphasis on affordable housing, finance, and regulatory matters. He is an active member of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition and has administered several public housing programs while serving as Chief of the Division of Community Affairs with the California Department of Housing

and Community Development. In the course of his independent review, Mr. Sabelhaus will:

- a. Analyze the financial health of the portfolio, determine where Housing Trust Fund funds have been spent, and verify that all funds to date have been spent according to state law (due September 30).
- b. Assess agency processes for administering the Housing Trust Fund and recommend operational changes to promote efficient and effective processes (due November 2, 2001).
- c. Propose new funding criteria (due November 27, 2001).
- d. Review the draft emergency rule prepared by the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that its content meets OCD's goals and addresses the findings and recommendations of the independent review.

Staff will pull together Mr. Sabelhaus's recommendations and stakeholder input, gathered through facilitated meetings of interested parties, for review by the Affordable Housing Advisory Board. The board will then make a recommendation to OCD Director Busse Nutley, who will issue the emergency rule by December 20.

Outstanding Employees

The Office of Community Development's reputation for innovation and getting things done is apparent in the performances of the first winners in the agency's new employee recognition program.

Special/Outstanding Group



Budget team, left to right: Jake Thomas, Vince Chavez, Connie Shumate, Bob Liston, Bonita Berndson, Sissi Nguyen, and Frank Retherford. On table: Don Alexander.

Bravo!

On September 21 the agency held its second event to recognize employees. Awards were given for Outstanding Employee of the Quarter and Outstanding Group.

Winners of the Award for Special/Outstanding Group—The Budget Staff

This year has been especially busy for the accountants who keep track of the

agency's budget. Three special legislative sessions generated more assignments and also compressed the administration's timetable for preparing next year's supplemental budget. Most days over the summer the budget staff arrived early and left late, as they reviewed and corrected fiscal notes and allotments for both OCD and

the Office of Trade and Economic Development. On top of this unusual workload, they built a new coding structure and taught many employees how to use it. Throughout they were responsive to staff, supportive of one another, unbelievably patient—and they kept their sense of humor and appetite for snacks.

More employee awards on page 7

Outstanding Employees

The Office of Community Development's Employee Recognition

Employee of the Quarter



**Employee of the Quarter,
Lee Elliott, Community
Development Block Grant**

Thanks!

Award for Employee of the Quarter— Lee Elliott, Community Development Block Grant

This award recognizes Lee's initiative, creativity, motivation, and hard work in devising a highly efficient method of tracking and entering data into an antiquated but mandatory HUD disbursement and reporting information system. With the least

disruption to other employees, he has provided willing, helpful service, not only to his colleagues in the block grant program, but also to Housing, Fiscal, and Budget staff who have to work with this clumsy system. His efforts have efficiently balanced reimbursements with allocations for over 180 contracts totaling more than \$31 million dollars.

Calendar of Events



Governor Gary Locke has proclaimed October as Washington Archaeology Month

For information about events, please call (360) 586-3064. Or visit the Web site of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation: www.oahp.wa.gov

Governor Proclaims Weatherization Day—October 30, 2001

This year's National Weatherization Day marks the 25th anniversary of the federal Weatherization Assistance Program. Five million families across the country now have lower energy costs and warmer, safer homes. For information, see the Summer 2001 issue of *About Community*, visit the program's Web site at www.ocd.wa.gov, or call (360) 725-2948.

October 2 and 3	EFSEC. The first public meetings for the Wallula and Starbuck power-generation projects. October 2 in Burbank (Walla Walla County) and October 3 in Starbuck (Columbia County). For more information, call (360) 956-2121.
October 3 - 5	Community Mobilization Program's annual statewide contractor's meeting, Spokane, October 3-5, 2001. For more information, call (360) 725-3033.
October 12	Second Building Code Council Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Washington State Energy Code. October 12, in SeaTac. For more information, call (360) 725-2969.
October 15-17	Housing Washington 2001 Conference, Tacoma, October 15-17, 2001. For more information, call (360) 725-2999.
October 16-19	National Association of State Community Services Programs annual fall conference, Seattle, October 16-19. For more information, call (360) 725-2850.
October 23	Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Option Program (REACH) conference, Everett, October 23, 2001. For more information, call (360) 725-2854.
October 23-26	Office of Crime Victims Advocacy's annual conference, Lake Chelan, October 23-26. For more information, call 725-2886.